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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0655  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 3292  
RUCNTXD/AMEMBASSY MAJURO PRIORITY 0105  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 4098  
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA PRIORITY 0215  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5617  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2429  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 5131  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2729  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 3264  
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 1281  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 002102

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: PAPUA -- IN LEAD UP TO IMPORTANT ANNIVERSARY,  
TENSIONS SIMMER

REF: JAKARTA 2084 AND PREVIOUS

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Tensions continue to simmer in the Papuan region of eastern Indonesia. Popular anger is fed by slow implementation of the region's Special Autonomy Law and continued poverty and underdevelopment. In response to Papuan anger, the GOI continues to act with general restraint. In the lead up to December 1, the day that Papuans celebrate the 1961 raising of their (illegal) regional flag, there are concerns that rallies and street action will test GOI patience some more. Mission continues to be in touch with contacts urging that they work peacefully and in a cooperative way with the government for change. END SUMMARY.

SIMMERING TENSIONS

¶2. (C) A spate of recent demonstrations in eastern Indonesia's Papua and West Papua provinces has highlighted simmering tensions in the region. In the past few days, many Papuan cities have witnessed demonstrations to mark the anniversary of the November 11, 2001, murder of Papuan separatist leader Theys Eluay (reftel). (Note: In 2003, a court convicted seven members of the Indonesian military for their role in the murder. Despite the convictions, many Papuans remain irate over what they consider lenient sentences meted out to the killers.)

¶3. (C) Papuans have also expressed anger that the authorities have still not charged anyone in the fatal August 9 shooting of Opinus Tabuni. Tabuni was shot during a peaceful rally to mark United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Day in the central highland town of Wamena. Many Papuans suspect the security forces were responsible for the killing.

¶4. (C) While the situation has remained largely peaceful, contacts have told us that they fear things could get even more tense following another recent incident. In this

November 12 incident, police in Sorong, West Papua, killed one person following a clash with a crowd that had assembled after a motorcycle struck and seriously injured a child. According to law enforcement contacts, after the accident, a large crowd gathered near the scene and began burning motorcycles and roadside food stalls. Many of the crowd carried spears, knives and other traditional weapons. The crowd reportedly clashed with police, who fired on them with rubber bullets. One civilian who was shot at close range died after the clash.

15. (C) In an effort to keep a lid on the situation, the Papua Police Chief General F.X. Bagus Ekodanto visited the scene on November 13 and met with local leaders. The family of the victim has demanded that those responsible for the shooting be prosecuted and the police have promised to investigate the matter. Contacts in Sorong say that the situation remains tense.

#### UNDERLYING CAUSES

16. (C) While there have been recent incidents that have jacked up tensions, several underlying and long-standing political and economic causes contribute to the tensions in the region. Many Papuans are frustrated with the slow implementation of the provinces' Special Autonomy Law. (Note: Under the law, the provincial government assumes responsibility for all areas of governance except foreign affairs, defense and security, fiscal and monetary policy, religious affairs and justice.) Numerous Papuan contacts have told poloff that they have seen few concrete results from the law, despite its being on the books for seven years. These Papuans allege that Jakarta officials are conspiring

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to retain control of the province and its enormous natural-resource wealth in the interests of the central government.

17. (C) Papuans also chafe at restrictions on freedom of expression. A number of Papuans have faced treason charges for their involvement in peaceful protests where activists raised the "Morning Star" flag. (Note: The GOI considers the flag a separatist symbol and has banned its use.) Additionally, the GOI has banned two different books by Papuan authors in the past year. The government has said that the books--which purport to describe GOI "crimes" Papua--threaten public order in the region. All of this leads to a situation where many Papuans believe that their voices are not being heard, according to contacts.

18. (C) Finally, Papua and West Papua continue to lag behind other regions of Indonesia in almost every economic and development indicator. The region has the country's highest rates of HIV/AIDS, the lowest educational attainment and the least developed infrastructure.

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19. (C) The GOI has another story to tell. According to Jakarta, the reasons for the lagging implementation of the autonomy law are many. The Papua provincial government lacks the administrative and institutional capacity to manage the responsibilities delegated to it under the law. The government of West Papua lags even further behind in this respect. Additionally, policy differences between Papua Governor Barnabas Suebu and district heads in the province have stalled much of the provincial government's agenda, particularly on the economic development front. GOI officials say they are working hard with provincial authorities to improve governance in the region.

110. (C) In the near-term, there are concerns about the situation in the lead up to December 1, the day that Papuans celebrate the raising of their (illegal) regional flag. (Note: On December 1, 1961, the Dutch colonial

administration first allowed Papuans to use the "Morning Star" Flag and other symbols of sovereignty.) There are concerns that rallies and street actions commemorating this occasion will test GOI patience some more. Mission continues to be in touch with contacts urging that they work peacefully and in a cooperative way with the government for change.

HUME